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July 2006

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Big and Bright

Army MP finds rewarding career opportunities deep in the heart of Texas as a lieutenant in the Houston PD.

by Warren Duffie



Department. Newly promoted to lieutenant, she started an assignment with the department's robbery division in May.

For the previous three years, she had served as an administrative personnel committee coordinator in the department's northern district — managing case files for 51 injured police officers and aiding their transition back to active duty. Zogg's primary responsibilities were maintaining contact with wounded cops and their doctors, keeping tabs on their conditions and recoveries, and determining whether they can return to the force.

"Many of the things I learned as an Army team leader come into play each day," says the MP-turned-cop.

"Keeping track of paperwork, maintaining open lines of communication, and adhering to the concept of 'team.' I'm so grateful to be in a civilian job where I can keep my military skills sharp."

A Texas-Sized Need for Veterans

Are you looking for a rewarding and meaningful profession? Do you want to continue to be a role model in your community? Not quite ready to get rid of the uniform yet? Consider a

career with the Houston PD, which employs more than 5,300 police officers, many with prior military experience.

The department is a paramilitary organization, so your physical fitness, marksmanship skills, and cool head under pressure will be huge assets. And the pay is pretty good, too. Academy cadets and probationary officers earn \$29,164 yearly, and full-fledged cops pull in a minimum annual salary of \$36,022. In addition, you can earn extra pay for obtaining a college degree, being bilingual, and serving in hazardous duty assignments. Other perks include medical and dental coverage, paid overtime and holidays, college tuition reimbursement, a pension after serving 25 years, and disability benefits.

For acceptance into the academy, you must be between the ages of 21 and 44, have completed 60 semester hours of college with a 2.0 G.P.A. or been honorably discharged from the military, and pass civil service and physical fitness exams. The academy lasts six

Julie Zogg thrives on excitement. During her four years in the Army, this former sergeant launched herself from C-130 airplanes, gained a reputation as a crack shot with a pistol and M-16, and was one of the first female team leaders assigned to the commanding general's security detail at her base.

So it's no surprise that when this whirlwind of energy left the Army for the tranquility of civilian life, she hit a funk.

"I tried hanging up my combat boots, but I got bored very soon," says Zogg, 37. "So I joined the Reserve — a move that eventually led to my career in law enforcement — for some excitement and adventure."

And the action hasn't stopped during her 10-year tenure with the Houston Police



Quick Stats

Company: Houston Police Department

Founded: 1841

Headquarters: Houston, Texas

Employees: 5,300 police officers

Web site: www.houstontx.gov/police/careers.htm



months and teaches you about community policing, evidence processing, and patrol procedures, to name a few subjects. Physical fitness, self-defense, driving, and firearms are also heavily emphasized. For more information, visit <http://www.houstontx.gov/police/careers.htm>.

"Military veterans are ideal employees because they tend to be more mature, responsible, and resourceful than others of similar age," says Michael Klutchka, who works in the department's recruiting office. "Lieutenant Julie Zogg is a superb example of a military-trained applicant whose career is a testament to the opportunities we provide to veterans."

"For example, we visit numerous military bases to participate in ACAP classes, advertise in *G.I. Jobs*, and have just joined the U.S. Army PaYS program [aimed at young people yearning for quality civilian employment when they leave the Army] as a networking partner," Klutchka continues. "We also offer veterans five additional points on their civil service exams if they can show they received an honorable discharge."

From Guarding Generals to Chasing Crooks

Zogg was born into the Army—on a base near Seoul, Korea—and spent her high school years at Fort Sill, OK. Upon graduating in 1987, she realized she wasn't ready for college and craved adventure. So she decided to "be all that she could be."

After basic and military police training at Fort McClellan, Zogg attended Basic Airborne School at Fort Benning for four weeks. She then went to Frankfurt, Germany, as part of Fifth (V) Corps, where she was assigned to the commanding general's security detail and was one of its first female team leaders.

"I like to tell people that I just missed Colin Powell, who left Fifth (V) Corps right before I came," Zogg says. "I truly loved the Army—the teamwork, camaraderie, and physical fitness. I'm an avid runner, and I jog about 20 miles a week, so staying in shape is crucial for me."

As much as she enjoyed her military career, by 1992 she had married—to a fellow soldier at Frankfurt—and the couple decided to move to Houston to try civilian life. Zogg worked various banking and retail jobs, but within a year the boredom was stifling. So she signed up with a Reserve unit in Huntsville, Texas, serving until 1996 and

earning a promotion to staff sergeant.

But her time in the Reserve satisfied more than Zogg's adrenaline rush—it led to a new career.

"A fellow reservist had applied to the Houston Police Academy and encouraged me to look into it," Zogg says. "I liked what I saw, applied, and was at the academy within a year."

After completing the academy and her probationary period, Zogg's first assignment was working the night shift in Central Houston, responding to everything from domestic disputes to DWIs. After six years, she was promoted to patrol sergeant at another district—supervising 10 officers, reviewing policy issues, and participating in car chases in which her officers were engaged.

"That's where my experience as a team leader first helped me," Zogg says. "I was

"Military veterans are ideal employees because they tend to be more mature, responsible, and resourceful than others of similar age."

— Michael Klutchka —

responsible for the officers under me and had to motivate them and ensure compliance with department policies. It was very rewarding."

After a year as a patrol sergeant, Zogg was assigned to her position as an administrative personnel committee coordinator.

The Zogg File

Highest Rank Held: Staff Sergeant (E-6)
Education and Training: Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course, Airborne School, Protective Leadership School, Primary Leadership Development Course, Anti-Terrorism Defensive Driving Course
Experience: Spent four years on active duty and three years in the Reserve.
Positions: Team Leader, Military Police Sergeant

Chronological Résumé

1996 - Present Police Officer, Houston Police Department

1993 - 1996 Military Police Sergeant, U.S. Army Reserve, Huntsville, Texas

1988 - 1992 Team Leader/Military Police Sergeant, Commander's Protective Services Detail, Fifth (V) Corps, Frankfurt, Germany

Day in the Life

0900 - 1000 Arrive at work, check voice mail and e-mail.
 1000 - 1700 Review case files, contact injured police officers and their physicians, check on the status of officers and whether they can return to the police force.
 1700 Go home.

Zogg's Advice:

Although she wouldn't change anything about her transition, Zogg does have one regret: "When I came out in 1992, there weren't as many resources to help with the transition experience. So, being eager to work, I took the first job I could get."

"Think very hard about whether you want to leave the military," she continues. "Uncle Sam really takes care of you, but as a civilian you're on your own. But if you do decide to get out, figure out what you want to do, thoroughly research that industry, and make up your mind to do your very best." ★



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